

### **Amendments to the Claims**

1. (Currently Amended) A method of reducing blocking artifacts in video compression, comprising:
  - for a block edge segment of a block portion of the video where the block edge segment has a length of plural pixels, sampling an edge strength measure at a subset of pixel locations less than all pixel locations along the block edge segment's length;
  - determining whether to filter the block edge segment based on the sampled edge strength measure;
  - filtering the block edge segment conditioned on the determination, wherein the determination based on the sampled edge strength measure at the subset of pixel locations applies to filtering at all pixel locations along the block edge segment.
2. (Currently Amended) A method of reducing blocking artifacts in video compression, comprising:
  - evaluating a deblocking filter condition for a block edge between two blocks in a frame of the video based at least in part on a frame type, motion vectors of the blocks, and non-zero residual error;
  - determining whether to filter the block edge dependent at least in part upon the evaluation;
  - sampling an edge strength measure at locations less than a full length of the block edge;
  - and
  - further basing the determination of whether to filter the block edge based on the sampled edge strength measure; and
  - if determined to filter the block edge, applying a deblocking filter to the block edge, wherein the determination based on the sampled edge strength measure at the locations less than the full length of the block edge applies to filtering at all pixel locations along the block edge.
- 3-6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) A digital video signal processing system comprising:  
a video encoder/decoder;  
an in-loop deblocking filter in the video encoder/decoder; and  
a deblocking condition evaluator for controlling application of the in-loop deblocking filter to an encoded block within a frame of video according to an evaluation of a deblocking condition based at least in part upon a frame type, motion vectors of the block, ~~and~~ residual error of the blocks being non-zero, and an edge strength measurement sampled at fewer than all pixel locations along a block edge;  
wherein the determination based on the sampled edge strength measurement at the pixel locations fewer than all locations along a block edge applies to filtering at all pixel locations along the block edge.

8. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium having software programming of a video encoder or decoder carried thereon, including code executable on a computer to perform a method of reducing blocking artifacts in compressed video processed by the video encoder or decoder, the method comprising:

for a block edge segment of a block portion of the video where the block edge segment has a length of plural pixels, sampling an edge strength measure at a subset of pixel locations less than all pixel locations along the block edge segment's length;

determining whether to filter the block edge segment based on the sampled edge strength measure;

filtering the block edge segment conditioned on the determination, wherein the determination based on the sampled edge strength measure at the subset of pixel locations applies to filtering at all pixel locations along the block edge segment.